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ABSTRACT

The booklet presents results from a survey completed by 5,316 members of the National Association of Retarded Citizens. Findings are discussed for the following topics (sample findings in parentheses): membership characteristics (the two largest classes of occupations were professional/technical and homemakers, households had an annual average income of about $14,300.00); membership activity (slightly over one half of the respondents were parents of mentally retarded persons, 16% of the respondents served on committees or boards or were association officers); mentally retarded offspring (95% of those members having mentally retarded children had only one). Future plans for monitoring membership trends are discussed, and implications for membership recruitment and retention are drawn. (CL)

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NUMBER 2

M.R. RESEARCH

A SURVEY OF NARC MEMBERS

A MONOGRAPH SERIES PUBLISHED BY

THE RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONOGRAPH SERIES

The purpose of the Monograph Series is to provide a medium for publishing and disseminating 1) results of research supported by the NARC Research Fund and NARC Research and Demonstration Institute, 2) position papers, critiques and theoretical articles, and 3) other research-related material prepared by independent researchers and groups which has high relevance to NARC members and mentally retarded persons.

Clarity of writing and relevance to mental retardation are primary criteria which all manuscripts must possess in order to be considered for publication. Generally, technical reports of results of studies will not be suitable for submission. Articles which summarize large bodies of previously published research and which draw meaningful conclusions for the field would, however, be appropriate.

Prior to submission of manuscripts, authors are urged to first submit a one to two page letter giving an overview of the content of their manuscripts, the length of the document in terms of double-spaced, typewritten pages, the number of tables and figures and an explanation of the relevance of the work to the field of mental retardation and to NARC members.

Correspondence should be addressed to Chairman, Research Advisory Committee, NARC Research and Demonstration Institute, 2709 Avenue E East, Arlington, Texas 76011.

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A SURVEY OF NARC MEMBERS

The present report presents results from a survey sent to 15,043 randomly selected persons whose names appeared on the mailing list of Mental Retardation News. A total of 5,316 replies were received to two mailings of the survey. The survey was conducted as part of the NARC Organizational Dynamics Project, authorized by the Association's Research Advisory Committee and President in June, 1973.

The purposes of the survey were to learn: (a) what kinds of persons comprise the association; (b) the extent and nature of membership involvement in Association activities; and (c) the experiences of members who were parents of mentally retarded persons. The data should provide a basis for setting goals in terms of membership recruitment and involvement, help to identify the types of mental retardation represented among offspring of NARC's parent members, and eventually offer a possible means to involve the membership in future decision making via representative studies and surveys of selected subsamples from among the respondents.

Method

Survey instrument. The survey instrument was the result of a collaborative effort by the Association's Research Advisory Committee and its task force on Organizational Dynamics, the NARC Research Department and other key NARC volunteers and staff. A preliminary draft of the instrument was sent to all state associations for comment and review.

The computer firm which handles the Mental Retardation News mailing list was asked to prepare a tape with approximately 15,000 randomly selected names. This tape was used to generate mailing labels and to store newly created subject identification numbers which differed from the standard membership numbers. The computer company was asked to retain possession of the tape in order to lend confidentiality to the results. Keypunching and data analysis of results were handled through a separate computer facility.

The initial mailing to 15,043 NARC members, accompanied by an explanatory fact sheet and postage-paid, return envelope, took place in May, 1974, with a follow-up mailing approximately one month later. There were 3,906 responses to the first mailing and 1,469 responses resulting from the follow-up. The 5,375 surveys which were returned included 59 duplicates, thus reducing the total to 5,316.[1] This represented a response rate of 35.36 percent. The distribution of responses by state is shown in the Appendix.

[1]A more recent check of the files against actual survey forms showed that 14 surveys had not been included in the computerized data files. These have subsequently been added and make the total number of respondents equal to 5,330. Data from the additional 14 surveys were not included in this report.

MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The initial section of the survey dealt with membership characteristics. Well over half (60.47 percent) of the respondents fell in the family membership classification where husband and wife share a membership in their association. A little over one-third (35.85 percent) held individual memberships. The remaining respondents were Youth ARC members or indicated "some other type of membership." Data on marital status of respondents appear in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1
Current Marital Status

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Single	318	6.24
Married	4,156	81.55
Divorced	156	3.00
Spouse Deceased	444	8.72
Other	25	.49
TOTAL	5,096	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 220

While more than two-thirds of the respondents were females (68.15 percent), more females indicated they held family memberships than did male respondents. The difference required that the male/female percentage figures be adjusted to reflect the complementary family member whose spouse answered the survey. The adjusted percentages were 55.9 percent female and 44.1 percent male.

As may be seen in Table 1.2, almost half of the respondents had two (24.96 percent) or three (21.68 percent) children. A little more than 10 percent had no children and slightly less than 30 percent had 4 or more children. Turning next to Table 1.3, it appears that almost all those returning surveys had a high school or higher level of education. In the general population, about 60 percent have completed four years of high school or more. More than a quarter reported educational experiences beyond the bachelor's degree; about 10 percent reported some graduate schooling; about 12 percent held masters degrees and nearly 5 percent had doctoral degrees.

Table 1.2

Number of Children

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
0	646	12.91
1	565	11.29
2	1,249	24.96
3	1,085	21.68
4	715	14.29
5	355	7.09
6	191	3.82
7	113	2.26
8	51	1.02
9/more	34	.68
TOTAL	5,004	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 312

Table 1.3

Education Level

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Grade School	263	5.24
High School	1,383	27.51
Trade or Business School	385	7.66
Some College	967	19.24
Bachelor's degree	645	12.84
Some graduate school	532	10.59
Master's degree	613	12.19
Ph.D. or equivalent degree	238	4.73
TOTAL	5,026	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 290

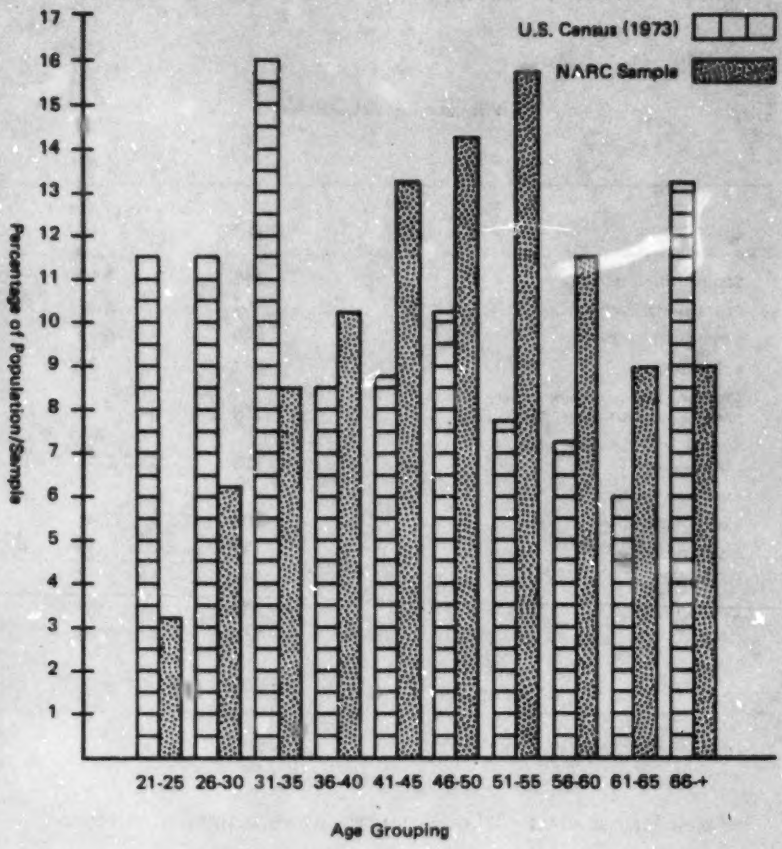

Figure 1. Comparison of Age Groupings for U.S. Population and NARC Membership

Ages of respondents along with corresponding U.S. Census data are illustrated in Figure 1. Generally, the NARC sample had disproportionately fewer persons in the 35 and under age categories than are found in the general population; i.e., the age of the survey respondents was greater than for the adult U.S. population. Seventy-five percent of the respondents were age 39 or older; 50 percent were 48 or over; and 25 percent were 57 or older. Data on the below 25 years of age category should not be interpreted to reflect Youth-NARC members, because Youth-NARC memberships were not on the computer files from which the survey respondents were drawn.

Table 1.4 shows the occupational levels of survey respondents.

Table 1.4

Occupation of Respondents

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Senior Administrative	363	7.17
Professional/technical	1,507	29.76
Managerial/proprietor	340	6.72
Sales/clerical	387	7.64
Craftsman/foremen (plumber, mechanic, carpenter, etc.)	150	2.96
Service (policemen, barber, waiter, etc.)	109	2.15
Laborer	93	1.84
Homemaker	1,466	28.96
Student	38	.75
Retired	449	8.87
Unemployed	45	.89
Other	116	2.29
TOTAL	5,063	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 253

The two largest classes of occupations were professional/technical (e.g., educators, engineers, lawyers, etc.) and homemakers, each of which accounted for almost 30 percent of the total. Few respondents had jobs as craftsmen/foremen (2.96 percent), service providers (e.g., police and barbers — 2.15 percent) or as laborers (1.84 percent). A little under 9 percent of the respondents were retired. Less than 1 percent were unemployed.

The next data deal with ethnic status, religious preference, household income and community size. The data in Table 1.5 show that the NARC sample was nearly an all-white one; blacks accounted for less than 2 percent; and Mexican-Americans, less than 1 percent.

Table 1.5

Ethnic Status

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
White	4,908	96.18
Black	96	1.88
Mexican-American	27	.53
Other (includes Cuban, Puerto Rican, American Indian, Oriental, Mixed and Other)	72	1.41
TOTAL	5,103	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 213

The remaining 1.41 percent of the respondents represented a diverse number of other ethnic backgrounds. U.S. Census figures for the year 1973 show that approximately 87.5 percent of the population was white, including Spanish-speaking ethnic groups, about 11 percent was black and the remaining approximately 1.5 percent of other racial backgrounds. Thus, black persons would appear to be underrepresented in the NARC sample.

The religious preferences of respondents to the survey are compared to the U.S. Census date in Figure 2. More sample members indicated having a religious preference than do U.S. citizens in general. The NARC sample had slightly more Catholic and many more Protestant members proportionately than the total U.S. population.

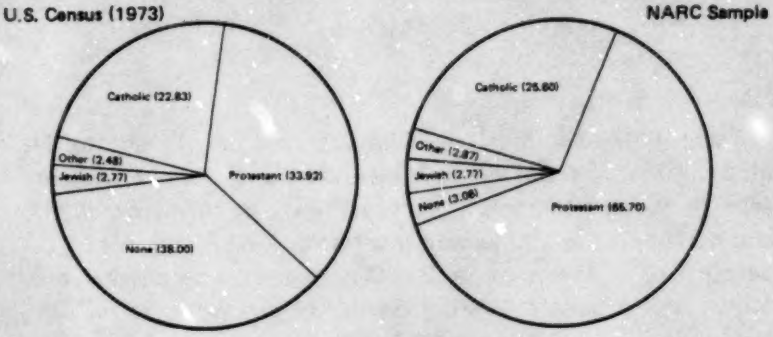

Figure 2. Relative distributions of religious preferences in the NARC Sample and the U.S.

The income data in Table 1.6 reveal that households of the NARC sample had an annual average income of about $14,300. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the median income for American families in 1972 was $11,116, which when expanded at 6.23 percent for 1973 and 10.97 percent for 1974 (Department of Labor, 1974) amounted to $13,104, or about $1,200 less than for NARC households. In other words, the NARC respondents appeared to earn more money than did persons in the general population.

Table 1.6

Annual Income of Household

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
$1-2,500	100	2.07
2,501-5,000	320	6.64
5,001-10,000	1,025	21.23
10,001-15,000	1,428	29.58
15,001-20,000	892	18.48
20,001-30,000	685	14.19
Over 30,000	377	7.81
TOTAL	4,827	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 489

Table 1.7 shows that NARC sample members tended to live in smaller towns and communities. About three out of every four of the NARC sample members lived in towns of 50,000 and under. In the U.S., about one-fourth (26.50 percent) of the people live in towns under 2,500 population and another one-fourth approximately (27.70 percent) live in towns over 100,000. Not quite half (45.80 percent) live in towns between 2,500 and 100,000.

Table 1.7

Community Size

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Under 2,500	840	17.13
2,501-10,000	1,186	24.19
10,001-50,000	1,565	31.92
50,001-100,000	512	10.44
100,001-500,000	473	9.65
500,001-1,000,000	170	3.47
Over 1,000,000	157	3.20
TOTAL	4,903	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 413

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY

The second section of the survey dealt with membership activity in the Association. Table 2.1 shows the distribution of members by the number of years since they first became involved in the

Table 2.1

Years In Which Respondents Joined NARC

YEAR JOINED	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
before 1950	88	1.81
1950-1954	254	5.22
1955-1959	435	[illegible]
1960-1964	819	16.88
1965-1969	1,293	26.66
1970-1974	1,964	40.46
TOTAL	4,853	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 463

ARC movement. A large minority (40.46 percent) of the respondents had been members for five or less years and about two-thirds (67.12 percent) for less than ten years. Those who indicated membership before 1950 (1.81 percent) would, of course, have been members of local or state associations since 1950 was the year the national component was established.

Three survey questions dealt with interests in mental retardation and the Association. One of these asked about the member's relationship to mentally retarded persons, the results of which appear in Table 2.2. Slightly over half of the respondents indicated they were parents of mentally retarded persons, and about 11 percent were foster parents or relatives. Almost one-fifth were professionals serving mentally retarded persons and nearly one-fourth of the respondents described themselves as interested citizens.

Table 2.2

Relationship to Mentally Retarded Persons

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Parent of a mentally retarded person	2,728	51.32
Foster parent	61	1.15
Brother or sister	149	2.80
Other relative	382	7.19
Professional serving mentally retarded persons	1,036	19.49
Interested citizen	1,289	24.25
Other	248	4.67
TOTAL		110.87

NOTE: Percentages total to more than 100 because some respondents fell into more than one category.

Next, members were asked how they first learned about the Association. The results are shown in Table 2.3. The most fre-

Table 2.3

How Respondents First Learned about the Association

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Knew other members	1,314	26.33
Approached in membership drive	730	14.63
Helped organize local association	587	11.76
Had child in special education classes and were referred to ARC by school	776	15.55
Heard about ARC from fellow professional	454	9.10
Referred to ARC by pediatrician, family physician or other professional	204	4.09
Referred by community service agency or social worker	116	2.32
Heard about ARC in news media	238	4.78
Other	571	11.44
TOTAL	4,990	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 326

quently occurring answer was "I knew other persons who were members," selected by over a quarter of the respondents. Over 14 percent said they first learned about the Association during a membership drive. Thus, more than 40 percent of the members became acquainted with the Association by personal contact through friends or through membership campaigns. An additional approximately 12 percent helped to organize their local associations and were thus members from the very beginning. A substantial number (15.55 percent) were referred to the ARC by the schools in which their children were enrolled in special education classes.

The third question asked members the reason behind their decision to become an ARC member. The results are broken down separately for persons who were (a) parents or foster parents; (b) professionals in the field of mental retardation; or (c) interested citizens, and appear in Table 2.4. Note that since not every respondent rated all eight alternatives supplied, the average rating on a five point scale (1 being "very unimportant" and 5, "very important") was computed for each alternative.

Table 2.4

Cross Tabulation of Interest in Mental Retardation and Reason for Joining an ARC

Reason for Joining ARC	Type of Interest					
	Parents		Professionals		Concerned Citizens	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Had mentally retarded child	4.69	1	2.07	7	2.44	8
Wanted to meet other people with mentally retarded children	4.25	4	2.93	5	2.80	5
Asked to join by a member	3.11	6	3.04	4	3.30	4
Joined through membership drive	2.70	7	2.30	6	2.73	6
Wanted services for my child	4.50	2	2.01	8	2.45	7
Wanted to help mentally retarded persons	4.22	5	4.48	2	4.28	1
Had professional interest in mental retardation	2.63	8	4.49	1	3.64	3
Wanted to find out more about mental retardation	4.34	3	4.13	3	4.02	2

For parents, having a mentally retarded child and needing services were the most important considerations in joining the Association. Also important was the opportunity to meet other parents. These three reasons (a mentally retarded child, service needs, and meeting other parents) constituted a cluster of highly

ranked items exclusive to parents. However, parents also rated two other items (learning more about mental retardation and helping mentally retarded persons) as being important to about the same degree as did professionals and interested citizens. These two items were the most important reasons for interested citizens joining and second and third in importance for professional members. The latter group indicated that professional interests were the most important reasons for their joining.

This analysis indicated that parents and professionals among survey respondents each had personal reasons which were important determinants in their membership. These two groups also shared with the group of concerned citizens a common motivation to help mentally retarded persons and to learn more about mental retardation.

The next three items concerned participation in the Association. Each of the alternatives describing the frequency with which people attended meetings (i.e., never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, and always) was selected by about a fifth of the respondents.

In Table 2.5 the reasons for attending local meetings are shown.

Table 2.5

Reasons for Attending Local ARC Meetings

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Learn about new services	2,108	39.65
Work for new programs	2,021	38.02
Learn more about mental retardation	1,901	35.76
Talk with other parents	1,669	31.40
Do not attend	1,195	22.48
Stimulate and educate other members	1,096	20.62
Other	248	4.67
TOTAL		192.60

NOTE: Percentages total to more than 100 because more than one reason could be selected.

To learn about new services and to work for new programs received the most responses, 39.65 and 38.02 percent, respectively. Stimulating and educating other members was chosen somewhat less often (20.62 percent).

The third item dealt with specific activities in which time and skills were donated. The results are shown in Table 2.6. Almost sixteen percent of the respondents served on committees, boards of directors as association officers. Eleven percent approximately served in fund raising. The percentages for remaining activities ranged from 8 percent to 2 percent.

Table 2.6

Time and Skills Donated to Local ARC

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Committee or board member or ARC officer	840	15.8
Fund raising	560	10.5
Making telephone calls	424	8.0
Publicity	361	6.8
Provide transportation for ARC activities	294	5.5
Professional service skills	242	4.6
Service program volunteer	213	4.0
Secretarial skills	191	3.6
Speakers bureau	167	3.1
Bookkeeping skills	143	2.7
Other personal skills	127	2.4

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MENTALLY RETARDED OFFSPRING

The third section of the survey dealt with those members who were parents, foster parents or legal guardians of mentally retarded individuals and specifically requested information about the retarded persons. An overwhelming majority (95.04 percent) of those members having mentally retarded children had only 1; less than 3 percent were the parents of 2 retarded persons. Only approximately 1 percent had more than 2 retarded offspring.

Table 3.1

Current Age of Mentally Retarded Individuals

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Under 5 years	166	5.60
6-10 years	441	14.88
11-15 years	627	21.15
16-20 years	626	21.11
21-25 years	487	16.42
26-30 years	295	9.95
31-35 years	181	6.10
36-40 years	71	2.39
41-45 years	39	1.31
46-50 years	17	.58
51 years - older	15	.51
TOTAL	2,965	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 11

Age date for the retarded offspring appear in Table 3.1. It can be observed that about one-fifth of the children were under age 10, approximately another one-fifth were between the ages 11-15, and nearly the same number between 16-20. Thus, slightly over 60 percent of all the retarded offspring of respondents were under 21. Somewhat more than half were males (56.59 percent).

Level of mental retardation appears in Figure 3, along with the estimated proportion of mentally retarded persons in each of the AAMD levels. The distribution of mental retardation among offspring of the respondents departed from that found in the population. Parents having moderately or severely retarded offspring constituted nearly three-fourths of all parent respondents, whereas a little less than 10 percent of the retarded population is generally regarded to be moderately or severely retarded. Similarly, the percentage of profoundly retarded offspring exceeded by approximately four and one-half times that found in the general population. Only about one-fifth were identified in the survey as mildly retarded, whereas 89 percent of mentally retarded people in the general population are thought to be mildly retarded. These results indicate that parents of mildly retarded persons were underrepresented in the NARC sample relative to population-based expectancies.

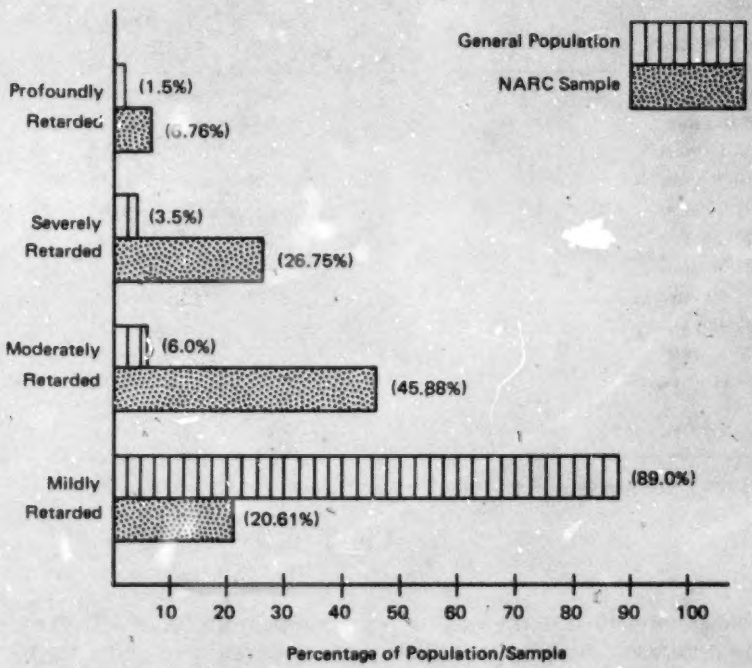

Figure 3. Relative distributions of levels of mental retardation in the general population and among offspring of survey respondents.

Another survey item dealt with the causes or types of mental retardation. The results appear in Table 3.2. Two points bear mentioning: (a) the proportion of Down's Syndrome persons was relatively very large since, in the general population, persons with Down's Syndrome constitute between five and 10 percent of all mentally retarded persons, and (b) the proportion of unknown causes was relatively small compared to the general population.

Table 3.2

Causes or Types of Mental Retardation of Respondents' Offspring

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Down's Syndrome	874	29.75
Some specific syndrome	91	3.10
Problem during pregnancy	137	4.66
Problem during birth	340	11.57
Infection or fever	122	4.15
Physical injury	39	1.33
Poison or toxicity	12	.41
Unknown	905	30.80
Other	418	14.23
TOTAL	2,938	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 38

Where did the retarded offspring of sample members reside? A relatively large proportion, as seen in Table 3.3, lived in their parents' homes. The next largest percentage 13.59 percent, lived in state residential facilities. The remaining approximately 14 percent dwelt by themselves or in a variety of other out-of-home settings, including private residential facilities, foster homes, large (9-35 persons) community homes, small (2-8 persons) community homes, and unspecified other arrangements.

The data on type of residence was examined in terms of age of the retarded offspring and their level of retardation. With increasing age, retarded persons tended more often to live away from home. At 10 years or younger, over 80 percent lived at home while less than half remained at home past age 40. However, institutionalization increased with age, from 5.8 percent below

10 years to 24.7 percent beyond age 40. These trends compliment one another and suggest that parents retain their retarded offspring in their homes as long as possible in the absence of viable options up until the time when advancing age requires that an alternative be selected.

Table 3.3

Current Residence of Mentally Retarded Individuals

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Parents home	2,174	74.07
A state residential institution (more than 35 residents)	399	13.59
Private residential institution	127	4.33
Foster home	69	2.35
Large group home in the community (9 to 35 residents)	50	1.70
Small group home in the community (2 to 8 residents)	26	.89
Other	90	3.07
TOTAL	2,935	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 41

With respect to level of retardation, only in cases of profoundly retarded persons did more individuals live in state residential facilities than at home. The number in private facilities also decreased uniformly as severity of retardation decreased. Little difference appeared in the proportion living in group homes among the different levels of severity.

The relative support costs paid by the family are broken down by age level and level of retardation in Table 3.4 and Table 3.5 respectively. In Table 3.4, two trends may be noted.

Table 3.4

Percentage Support Costs Borne by Families for Retarded Offspring at Different Age Levels

Age Level	Family-Borne Support Costs						
	None	Almost None	Less Than Half	About Half	More Than Half	Most or All	Total
10 or under %	3.8	5.4	3.6	2.1	1.6	83.5	100.00
11-20 %	5.4	7.4	4.7	2.8	2.9	76.8	100.00
21-40 %	12.1	12.0	8.5	9.6	11.8	45.8	100.00
41 & over %	19.5	17.1	8.1	9.8	5.7	39.8	100.00

Before age 21, the families paid most of the support costs (as opposed to subsidy income from other sources). After age 21, the proportion dropped below 50 percent and below 40 percent after age 40. Second, even after age 21, families continued to supply part of the support for the retarded individual in most cases; only 12.3 percent of the families provided no financial support for offspring in the 21-40 age group and only about 20 percent provided none for those in the over 40 age range.

Table 3.5

Percentage Support Costs Borne by Families for Retarded Offspring at Different Levels of Retardation

Family-Borne Support Costs	Level of Retardation			
	Profound %	Severe %	Moderate %	Mild %
None	14.2	8.2	5.9	10.6
Almost None	23.2	12.4	6.5	5.4
Less Than Half	11.8	7.7	4.9	4.4
About Half	5.6	5.8	4.9	5.3
More Than Half	6.3	5.5	5.4	5.5
Most or All	38.9	60.4	72.4	68.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Support costs varied as a function of level of retardation, as may be seen in Table 3.5. Most or all support costs were borne by approximately 70 percent of the families with mildly or moderately retarded children. Only about 60 percent of the families with severely retarded and about 40 percent of families with profoundly retarded children indicated they paid "most or all" of the support costs. Similarly, families paying none or very little decreased from a high of about 37 percent to a low of about 12 percent going from profoundly to mildly retarded. A somewhat greater percentage of families with mildly retarded children paid little or no support costs than did families with moderately retarded children. One possible reason that families bear more costs of their retarded offspring when the latter are functioning at a higher level is that a larger proportion of the more severely retarded offspring reside in state-supported residential facilities or have qualified for financial support through social security.

In Table 3.6 the programs currently attended by the mentally retarded individuals are shown. The three types of programs most frequently cited were school classes for moderately retarded persons (17.90 percent), sheltered workshops (14.55 percent) and summer camps (14.44 percent).

Table 3.6

Programs Currently Attended by the Mentally Retarded Individuals

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
School class for moderately retarded persons	646	17.90
Sheltered workshops	525	14.55
Summer camp	521	14.44
Activity center	329	9.12
School class for severely or profoundly retarded persons	326	9.01
Residential programs	302	8.37
School class for mildly retarded persons	277	7.67
A child development center run by the schools	233	6.46
Day care	176	4.87
Private school	154	4.26
Pre-school	121	3.35
TOTAL	3,609	100.00

Data on work experience appear in Table 3.7 for mentally retarded offspring age 21 and over of different levels of retardation. Very few of the profoundly or severely retarded offspring had ever held a job, but a large number (30.2 percent) of the moderately and nearly two-thirds (65.4 percent) of the mildly retarded offspring had. A large number 43.4 percent) of the mildly retarded offspring had held full time jobs.

Table 3.7

Job Experience for Different Levels of Mental Retardation Age 21 and Over

Job Category	Level of Retardation			
	Profound %	Severe %	Moderate %	Mild %
Never held job	94.5	84.4	59.8	34.6
Part-time job	3.6	9.2	17.3	22.0
Full time job	1.9	6.4	22.9	43.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Finally, parents were asked about the goals they envisioned for their retarded offspring. The results are shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Parents' Goals for the Mentally Retarded Individual

CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Self sufficiency or independence	1,001	35.01
State institution care	227	7.94
Private residential institution	144	5.03
Community residential group home	626	21.90
Undecided	861	30.12
TOTAL	2,859	100.00

NOTE: Non-responses = 117

A little over one-third (35.01 percent) sought self sufficiency or independence. State or private residential care was sought by about 13 percent of the parents, and slightly more than a fifth of the respondents wanted their children to live in community residential group homes. Not quite a third were undecided.

SUMMARY

Respondents to the survey tended to hold family memberships, have 2 or 3 children and were typically either homemakers or employed in administrative and technical positions. Almost all were white, a majority were Protestant, and on the average had family incomes between $14,000 and $15,000. They generally lived in smaller communities, under 50,000 in population.

Most respondents joined the Association within the last 10 years, and about 40 percent, within the last 5 years. About half were parents of mentally retarded individuals. About a fourth were concerned citizens and about a fifth professionals in the field.

The respondents heard about the Association through personal contact with members, membership drives and referrals by public schools in which their mentally retarded children were enrolled. The most common reasons for joining shared among parents, professionals and concerned citizens alike were a desire to help mentally retarded persons and to learn more about mental retarda-

tion. About a sixth of the respondents reported serving actively in their associations as officers, committee members or on their associations' boards of directors.

Respondents who were parents of mentally retarded persons reported generally having only one mentally retarded child. Over half of the children were under age 21 and tended to be moderately or severely retarded. Down's Syndrome and problems during pregnancy were most frequently associated with the mental retardation of the offspring.

Most of the offspring lived at home, but less than half of those who were profoundly retarded did so. Families with profoundly retarded offspring paid a smaller portion of the support costs than did families with less severely retarded children, but families generally continued to help support their retarded children beyond age 21. The services most prevalently used were school classes, sheltered workshops and summer camps.

FUTURE PLANS

Establishing the present data base was the first step in a long term program to monitor membership trends. In the future, the present sample will be augmented by newer members as they join the Association.

The results presented here should be regarded as tentative because of the low response rate and because necessary additional studies on non-responder characteristics have yet to be completed. The preliminary results do, however, provide an intermediate perspective on the demography of NARC members who responded to the survey. At present, the results may not be generalized to all NARC members because self selection in responding to the survey may have biased the present sample.

The data base will be useful in conducting surveys requiring broad-based input from the membership. Past efforts to obtain input through surveys in Mental Retardation News, for example, will be greatly improved upon by use of a small, but well-defined subsample of the current data base.

Tentatively planned is a study of attitudes of members on a number of current issues dealing with human rights and values. This should be of considerable value in helping Association leaders in preparing position and policy statements on critical issues.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The present study contains a number of findings which have relevance to efforts to increase the number of members of NARC and to retain persons once they do become members. Some of these implications are highlighted below:

- One-to-one or face-to-face contact by a friend or acquaintance appears to be the most effective and successful appeal in acquainting potential members with the ARC movement.

- The paucity of minority, low income and intercity members and parents of mildly retarded persons suggests that mentally retarded persons are unevenly represented among our membership and that the Association lacks a broad based representation of the population. In particular, efforts must be undertaken to increase the level of representation of these groups.

- In appealing to parents of mildly retarded persons, stress needs to be given to the benefits afforded to the less handicapped retarded individuals, such as increased employment opportunities and residential alternatives.

- Inadequate services may be one factor in parents of mentally retarded persons joining the Association, since 41 percent live in communities with populations of less than 10,000. Such communities may have inadequate resources to provide the full range of services needed by mentally retarded individuals.

- There is a need to utilize recruitment strategies already available to increase representation of youth and younger adults (21-35) among our members. An organization with a maturing membership needs the infusion of new and younger members in order to retain its vitality, continuity and momentum. Interest in prevention may be jeopardized in future years without involving younger persons, since 75 percent of the respondents were past the child bearing ages.

- A small percentage of members donated time and effort in specific skills and work areas, suggesting a low level of membership involvement.

- Since nonparents represent an increasing percentage of the membership and the number of parent members is leveling off, membership appeals need to address other motivating factors including the sharing of specific work related skills such as bookkeeping, organizational development and other kinds of volunteer work.
- Local associations should seek the assistance of special education and other service providing agencies in directing parents of mentally retarded persons toward memberships in the ARC.

- Local associations need to provide opportunities for parent-to-parent programs, since there are still a large number of parents concerned about talking to others with retarded children. This would also provide an incentive for parents to attend meetings.

- Local associations should have on hand information and program materials whereby new members' interests may be kindled and stimulated. The failure to receive more information may be one reason why over half the members rarely or only occasionally attend membership meetings.

- Common to parents, professionals and concerned citizens alike were the desires to learn more about mental retardation and to help mentally retarded persons. These two themes would appear potent incentives in all efforts to attract additional members. The common desires to learn more about mental retardation suggest a need to make available more structured information during membership meetings.

APPENDIX

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESPONSE RESULTS

REGION	STATE	NUMBER SENT	NUMBER RETURNED FIRST MAILING	%	SECOND MAILING	%	TOTAL RETURNED	%
Northeast Region	Connecticut	276	76	27.53	23	8.33	99	35.86
	Delaware	35	11	31.42	4	11.42	15	42.85
	Maine	123	27	21.95	11	8.94	38	30.89
	Maryland	208	81	38.94	22	10.57	103	49.51
	Massachusetts	413	120	29.06	47	11.38	167	40.43
	New Hampshire	47	21	44.68	5	10.63	26	55.31
	New Jersey	484	83	22.80	41	11.26	124	34.06	
	New York	21	8	38.09	3	14.28	11	52.38
	Pennsylvania	823	217	26.36	82	9.96	299	36.33
	Rhode Island	130	30	23.07	18	13.84	48	36.92
	Vermont	22	5	22.72	3	13.63	8	36.36
Region Total		2482	679	27.57	259	10.51	938	38.09
Southeast Region	Alabama	303	63	20.79	23	7.59	86	28.38
	D.C.	28	9	32.14	2	7.14	11	39.28
	Florida	486	106	21.82	54	10.84	159	31.82
	Georgia	862	145	16.82	70	8.12	215	24.94
	Kentucky	147	32	21.76	20	13.60	52	35.37
	Mississippi	178	30	16.85	19	10.67	49	27.52
	North Carolina	572	134	23.42	46	8.04	180	31.46
	South Carolina	193	44	22.79	6	3.10	50	25.90
	Tennessee	461	72	15.61	32	6.94	104	22.55
	Virginia	396	108	26.76	36	9.09	142	35.86
	West Virginia	70	18	25.71	7	10.00	25	35.71
	Puerto Rico	23	2	8.69	2	8.69	4	17.38
Region Total		3731	769	20.36	317	8.48	1077	28.86
North Central Region	Illinois	649	165	25.42	66	10.16	231	35.58
	Indiana	703	172	24.46	79	11.23	251	35.70
	Iowa	772	201	26.03	96	12.43	297	38.47
	Michigan	685	82	14.01	67	11.46	149	25.47
	Minnesota	710	257	36.19	63	8.87	320	45.07
	Nebraska	301	94	31.22	28	9.30	122	40.53
	North Dakota	105	34	32.38	4	3.80	38	36.19
	Ohio	381	114	29.92	32	8.39	146	38.32
	South Dakota	213	54	30.04	32	15.02	86	45.07
	Wisconsin	556	214	38.48	57	10.25	271	48.74
Region Total		4975	1397	28.08	524	10.53	1921	38.61
South Central Region	Arkansas	245	55	22.44	17	6.93	72	29.38
	Kansas	347	86	26.24	40	11.52	136	39.76
	Louisiana	454	86	18.94	30	6.60	116	25.55
	Missouri	266	63	23.68	22	8.27	85	31.95
	Oklahoma	144	26	18.05	11	7.63	37	25.69
	Texas	549	141	25.68	64	11.65	205	37.34
Region Total		2005	469	23.39	184	9.17	653	32.56
Northwest Region	Alaska	44	8	18.18	11	25.00	19	43.18
	Idaho	62	14	29.03	4	6.45	18	29.03
	Montana	104	34	32.69	10	9.61	44	42.30
	Oregon	179	62	34.63	19	10.61	81	45.25
	Washington	234	82	35.04	23	9.82	105	44.87
	Wyoming	53	19	35.84	4	7.54	23	43.39
Region Total		676	219	32.39	71	10.50	290	42.89
Southwest Region	Arizona	122	27	22.13	10	8.19	37	30.32
	California	638	206	32.28	58	9.11	264	41.39
	Colorado	137	56	40.87	15	10.94	71	51.82
	Hawaii	44	13	29.54	8	18.18	21	47.72
	Nevada	42	16	38.09	3	7.14	19	45.23
	New Mexico	142	41	28.87	15	10.56	56	39.43
	Utah	71	23	32.39	5	7.04	28	39.43
Region Total		1194	382	31.99	114	9.54	496	41.54
NATIONAL TOTAL		15,043	3,908	25.98	1,469	9.76	5,375	35.73

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